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C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 000413

SIPDIS

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TAGS: PGOV PREL MOPS PHUM PREF CG

SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH PROMINENT GOMA NGO LEADER ABOUT THE RWANDOPHONE AGENDA

REF: A) KINSHASA 409 B) KINSHASA 388

Classified By: Ambassador William J. Garvelink for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

¶1. (C) Summary: We recently met with Alois Tegera, head of a Goma NGO, to discuss the rise of Rwandophone influence in North Kivu. Tegera expressed hope that the Kabila-Kagame rapprochement would bring long-term stability to North Kivu, while at the same time evincing regret about what he perceives as the end of the nascent experiment with democracy in the province, and by extension, in the DRC as a whole. He also provided details as to potential flashpoints and sources of resistance to the Rwandophone agenda. End summary.

¶2. (C) Tegera said that it was encouraging that DRC President Kabila was able and willing to strike a deal with Rwandan President Kagame, demonstrating that Kabila had matured as a politician. Tegera was optimistic that this deal would ultimately bring peace and stability to North Kivu. At the same time, Tegera implied that Kabila's actions more and more centered on his desire to hold on to power. He also contrasted the Kabila-Kagame deal's positive consequences for the region with its negative implications for democracy and free expression, especially in the context of Kabila's increasingly repressive treatment of any opposition.

¶3. (C) In terms of resistance to the Rwandophone agenda, he said that, officially, the Nande are opposed to dividing North Kivu into two parts (reflets) and many of them, particularly businessmen, would lose out. At the same time, many Nande, particularly politicians, support the idea of a separate Petit and Grand Nord: they view Rwandophone control of the Petit Nord as a price worth paying for their complete control of the Grand Nord. The other losers in the Rwandophone equation are the Nkunda-loyalists (Tegera asserted this meant all Congolese Tutsis). This group wants both independence from Kigali and an "untarnished" Congolese identity. Nkunda's struggle promised these things, but ultimately brought them too close to Kigali. Overall, these groups will complain, but they will not be able to resist the Kabila-Kagame rapprochement.

¶4. (C) Unsurprisingly, Tegera highlighted the return of refugees to North Kivu as likely to create huge problems. However, he said that the negative effects could be managed with the construction of a good road from Goma to Walikale, along with proper infrastructure, which would result in the population naturally migrating into resource-rich Walikale and out of Masisi and Rutshuru's crowded hills.

¶5. (C) Comment: Tegera's gloomy assessment that the price of stability in North Kivu is the loss of democracy and free expression may seem somewhat overwrought. Nevertheless, many

see the whole point of a Rwandophone agenda as promoting the interests of a certain group of people to the exclusion of others. Tegera's assertion, however, that those disadvantaged by the Rwandophone agenda will simply acquiesce is not convincing. The recent history of North Kivu does not suggest this. End comment.

GARVELINK